

The Stock Exchange had been closed for a week, and it was now urged on all sides that the reopening should be ordered : on the one hand, by holders who naturally desired to learn approximately, by free dealings, the real worth of securities ; and, on the other hand, by members whose current expenses were continuing without the support of income." It was considered at all events that if, at least, the actual value of Consols —the representative of British credit—could be ascertained, confidence, if not fully established, would certainly be steeled into stubborn resolve by revelation of the truth; many owners of Consols were willing to sell, even at heavily depreciated prices, in order to provide capital for their hampered businesses, and many buyers were prepared to purchase with cash, in the probability of greatly enhanced values thereafter. But the Committee's wisdom was happily, the sounder, since it was founded sagaciously upon a wide and clear perception of the vast general evils which would ensue to the country as a whole. Moreover, had the Exchange remained open or had been reopened, and free transactions permitted, opportunity would have been deliberately afforded to the enemy to supply himself with gold, for prosecution of the war, at Britain's expense; owners in Berlin, *e.g.* of Canadian and American securities could have sold them to banks and mercantile firms of Holland, receiving the proceeds in cash, while the Dutch purchasers could similarly have disposed of them on our Exchange.

*August  
8th.*

The financial position had changed so securely, that the bank rate of discount was again reduced to 5 per cent, and popular hopefulness had dawned. This decline of the rate revealed, in a marvellous manner (ever to be remembered in our future history as a happy augury in periods of darkness where manly resolution steadies the heart and virile energy impels the brain), the country's reserve of permanent financial strength, since, during the lapse of one week only, our national

credit had triumphantly lifted itself erect after the severest stroke which the most ancient memory or the most primitive records could recall. Gold was received from